



Public Forum Debate

Basic Forensics

Mrs. Wilson

Public Forum Debate
Student Notes

What is public forum debate?

- Style of debate compared to a nationally-televised debate, like *Crossfire*.
- Debaters argue an issue of national importance in terms that a "common" or "lay" person would understand.
- Teams of two alternate speeches for their side.
- Successful debaters make persuasive and logical arguments that is accessible to a wide variety of audiences.

How does public forum debate work?

- The debate round starts with a coin flip:
Winner chooses either the speaking order or pro/con side of the issue.
Loser decides the other
Example: winning team chooses pro side, the losing team decides speaking order
- Public forum debate involves three types of speeches:
Constructive speech (team builds their argument for/against the issue)
Rebuttal speech (team refutes opponent's arguments)
Final Focus speech (closing argument/last shot speech)
- Crossfire round: Teams question each other in order to reveal weaknesses in each other's arguments.
Each debate round has three chances for crossfire
- All speakers speak at a podium facing the audience.

Speech and timing schedule

- Team A: First speaker: Constructive speaker: 3 minutes
- Team B: First speaker: Constructive speaker: 3 minutes
- Crossfire: Between first speakers only: 2 minutes
- Team A: Second speaker: Rebuttal: 3 minutes
- Team B: Second speaker: Rebuttal: 3 minutes
- Crossfire: Between second speakers: 2 minutes
- Team A: First speaker: Final Focus: 2 minutes
- Team B: First speaker: Final Focus: 2 minutes
- Grand crossfire: All speakers: 2 minute

Constructive Speeches (First speakers only—3 minutes)

- First speakers give arguments for or against the topic, depending on which side the team is speaking for.
- Material is prepared in advanced and memorization is not required.
- Constructive speeches must correctly cite at least three sources.
- Constructive speeches are usually given by the least confident/least experienced team member.

First Crossfire (First speakers only—2 minutes)

- Crossfire begins after both constructive speeches have been given.
Team A's first speaker will ask the first question

Public Forum Debate Outline

1. Coin Flip
--winner chooses either side (pro/con) or speaking order
2. Constructive Speeches: written speeches
--1st speaker
--2nd speaker
3. Crossfire—all 4 speakers can ask questions after constructive speeches are given
--first question must go to the speaker who has just finished his/her speech,
then anyone can ask questions
Things to consider
--accuracy of evidence
--do arguments make sense?
--too much/too little evidence in constructive argument?
4. Second Speeches: Impromptu (on the spot) speeches that build on first and second speaker's arguments and the 1st Crossfire. You may choose to summarize and reinforce previous evidence or present new evidence that builds on your case or tears down your opponents' case.
--3rd speaker
--4th speaker
5. Grand Crossfire —all 4 speakers can ask questions after constructive speeches are given
--first question must go to the speaker who has just finished his/her speech,
then anyone can ask questions
Things to consider
--accuracy of evidence
--do arguments make sense?
--too much/too little evidence in constructive argument?
6. Judge announces decision for PRO/CON side.

Basic Forensics Public Forum Debate Rubric

Total Points: 80 points (Final Exam Grade)

Prep Work (Research, list of arguments)	____/20	____/20	____/20
Draft of Constructive Speeches	____/20	____/20	____/20

PRO SIDE

SPEAKER 1:

SPEAKER 2:

SPEAKER 3:

SPEECH 1: Constructive Speech

Introduces you and your partner(s)	____/2
Attention-grabber/hook	____/5
Topic is read word for word	____/3
Background of issue/controversy	____/5
Lists 2-3 arguments (AREs), cites sources	____/10

SPEECH 2: Rebuttal Speech

Answers all of Opp's AREs	____/10
Uses the 4-Step Refutation Process	____/5
Short conclusion that summarizes debate so far	____/10
**May also use this speech to introduce new AREs	YES/NO

SPEECH 3: Final Focus

Repeats Pro's main arguments	____/5
Refutes Con's claims one last time	____/5
Gives reasons why Pro should win	____/5

SPEAKER POINTS

Vocal variety (pitch, emphasis, tone, volume)	____/5	____/5	____/5
Poise	____/5	____/5	____/5

CON SIDE

SPEAKER 1:

SPEAKER 2:

SPEAKER 3:

SPEECH 1: Constructive Speech

Introduces you and your partner	____/2
Attention-grabber/hook	____/5
Topic is read word for word	____/3
Background of issue/controversy	____/5
Lists 2-3 arguments (AREs), cites sources	____/10

SPEECH 2: Rebuttal Speech

Answers all of Pro's AREs	____/10
Uses the 4-Step Refutation Process	____/5
Short conclusion that summarizes debate so far	____/10
**May also use this speech to introduce new AREs	YES/NO

SPEECH 3: Final Focus

Repeats Opp's main arguments	____/5
Refutes Pro's claims one last time	____/5
Gives reasons why Opp should win	____/5

SPEAKER POINTS

Vocal variety (pitch, emphasis, tone, volume)	____/5	____/5	____/5
Poise	____/5	____/5	____/5